

# *U.S. Lawmakers to Submit Bills to Ease Restrictions on Cuba*

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Havana, February 4 (RHC) -- Following the announcement December 17th by Cuba and the United States to re-establish diplomatic relations and amid polls showing more and more U.S. citizens favoring a change of policy toward Cuba, U.S. lawmakers expect to introduce a series of bills in the Senate over the next few months to ease restrictions of the over-50-year U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade of the island nation.

U.S. senior congressional aides, cited by Reuters, said on Monday that this would be the first practical step towards lifting the unilateral and extraterritorial siege against Cuba.

One of the bills would allow U.S. telecommunications companies to do business in Cuba; another aims at the agricultural market and a third one is considered "a broader effort" to lift the blockade, Reuters reported.

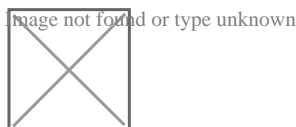
The plan is to raise debate on Washington's Cuba policy, despite current opposition in Congress, and when public opinion surveys reveal increasing numbers of U.S. citizens favoring normal relations with the island.

Recently, Republican and Democratic senators introduced a bill aimed at lifting restrictions on travel to Cuba. Recent modifications on the Cuba travel ban announced by President Barack Obama now allow traveling under some 12 categories, including cultural, religious trips among others, but tourism is still excluded by law.

A process to normalizing relations between Washington and Havana, which would take time and effort, finds large bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, but at the same time faces resistance by a number of mostly Republican lawmakers, who have always maintained a hard-line position against the island and against the Cuban Revolution.

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